

Message Text

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R 281745Z MAY 75

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

INFO AMEMBASSY TOKYO

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS:EFIS, UR, JA

SUBJECT: SOVIET FISHERY STATISTICS

1. AT FEBRUARY 1975 BILATERAL NEGOTIATIONS, FOLLOWING
US EXPRESSION OF SERIOUS CONCERN OVER NUMEROUS APPARENT
DISCREPANCIES IN SOVIET FISHERY STATISTICS, A SPECIAL
WORKING GROUP WAS ESTABLISHED TO LOOK INTO PROBLEM.
SOVIETS WERE ABLE TO PARTIALLY EXPLAIN SOME OF DATA
DISCREPANCIES BUT WERE NOT ABLE AT ALL TO EXPLAIN TO
US SATISFACTION SERIOUS OMISSION OF EFFORT AND CATCH
DATA FOR LARGE NUMBERS OF SOVIET SIDE-TRAWLERS OBSERVED
OPERATING IN GULF OF ALASKA FOR GROUND FISH AND IN HAKE
AND FALL SHRIMP FISHERIES IN 1973. THESE SIGHTINGS WERE
MADE BY JOINT US COAST GUARD/NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES
SERVICE (NMFS) SURVEILLANCE FLIGHTS AND CAREFULLY DOCU-
MENTED. BASED ON THESE SIGHTINGS, US CALCULATED SOVIET
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SIDE-TRAWLER FISHING EFFORT TOTALLED 1,567 VESSEL DAYS
IN GULF OF ALASKA GROUND FISH FISHERY, 279 VESSEL DAYS
IN HAKE FISHERY AND 378 VESSEL DAYS IN FALL SHRIMP FISH-
ERY. SOVIET REPRESENTATIVES PARTICIPATING IN SPECIAL

WORKING GROUP CLAIMED THAT IF THERE WERE NO DATA PROVIDED BY THEIR SIDE, THEN THEIR VESSELS COULD NOT HAVE BEEN ENGAGED IN THOSE FISHERIES.

2. SOV DEL HEAD KAMENTSEV ALSO INDICATED HE HAD INSUFFICIENT NOTICE OF PROBLEM AND WAS NOT PREPARED TO PROVIDE A FULL RESPONSE. ACCORDINGLY, AFTER TERMINATION OF TALKS, DIRECTOR SCHONING, NMFS, IN LETTER ADDRESSED TO KAMENTSEV DATED MARCH 5, SUPPLIED LIST OF SOVIET SIDE-TRAWLERS SIGHTED IN 1973 FISHING IN GULF OF ALASKA. ON MARCH 19, ZNAMENSKIY, SOV EMBASSY, RESPONDED BY LETTER, ON BEHALF OF KAMENTSEV, THAT SOVIET SIDE-TRAWLERS DID NOT CONDUCT ANY COMMERCIAL FISHING IN GULF AND THE SIGHTINGS BY US WERE PROBABLY OF THEIR SIDE-TRAWLERS SCOUTING FOR FISH OR TRANSITING THROUGH AREA. HOWEVER, IN OUR VIEW, CONTINUED PRESENCE OF LARGE NUMBERS OF SOVIET SIDE-TRAWLERS FOR EXTENDED PERIODS, OFTEN FISHING AND FREQUENTLY WITH CATCHES ON DECK, CANNOT BE INTERPRETED AS QUOTE FISH SCOUTING OPERATIONS OR VESSELS IN TRANSIT UNQUOTE. IN ADDITION, AT BILATERAL DISCUSSIONS HELD IN MOSCOW IN FEBRUARY 1973, KEY MEMBERS OF SOVIET DELEGATION, DR. MOISEEV, VNIRO, AND V.V. KIDANOV, DALRYBA, ACKNOWLEDGED THEN THAT PART OF SOVIET GROUND FISH FLEET OPERATING IN GULF OF ALASKA CONSISTED OF SIDE-TRAWLERS.

3. IN SUMMARY, US IS NOT AT ALL SATISFIED WITH RESPONSES PROVIDED BY SOVIETS. IN FACT, THEY HAVE ONLY SERVED TO WIDEN CREDIBILITY GAP. WE CONSIDER RELIABLE STATISTICS AS BEING ABSOLUTELY ESSENTIAL FOR PROPERLY MANAGING OUR OFFSHORE RESOURCES AND WE DO NOT CONSIDER SOVIET STATISTICS AS BEING RELIABLE AT ALL. POST IS REQUESTED TO CALL THIS MATTER TO THE ATTENTION OF APPROPRIATE OFFICIALS IN SOVIET GOVERNMENT AND EMPHASIZE US INTENTION TO PURSUE THIS MATTER FURTHER AT JULY MEETING. WE ALSO FEEL THAT THERE WOULD BE NO BASIS FOR DISCUSSING CATCH LIMITS (AS DISTINCT FROM CLOSED LIMITED OFFICIAL USE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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AREAS, SEASONS AND OTHER CONSTRAINTS) WITHOUT RESOLUTION OF US DOUBTS REGARDING SOVIET STATISTICS. POST IS REQUESTED TO REPORT ANY REACTION. INGERSOLL

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